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The objects are:

1. To teach the nearing approach of our Lord's return. James 5:8
2. To hold forth the Truth and to expose and resist error. Jude 3
3. To note passing events in the light of 'the Scripture of Truth.' 2 Peter 1:19
4. To unfold the Word of God by comparing Scripture with Scripture. Acts 17:11
5. To encourage missionary endeavour, and all service for Truth. Acts 1:8
6. To comfort and strengthen those who seek to stand with the Lord, apart from abounding lawlessness. 2 Timothy 2:19
7. To call for separation from false ecumenism. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

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Will there be a Battle of Armageddon?

By David McMillan

(This is a summary of a message preached at the monthly meeting of the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony on 28th October, 2022. It can be downloaded from the S.G.A.T. website).

The theme for our consideration is ‘Will there be a battle of Armageddon?’ That question is not new. It is a question that has often been asked. Whenever war breaks out, like the war in Ukraine, or whenever there is a military build-up, like that which took place in the Gulf a number of years ago, it is often stated or suggested, ‘this must be the battle of Armageddon.’ I want to make it clear, at the start, that that is a mistake. So, as we consider the question, will there be a battle of Armageddon? the answer of the Word of God is simply and clearly, ‘No, there will not.’

Armageddon is not a Battle

I want to point out that Armageddon is not a battle. No battle will take place at that location. That may surprise you because ‘the battle of Armageddon’ is often spoken of, by the secular world in their books and in their films, and even in the evangelical world by some churches and Bible teachers. However, that is a common mistake. It is not the teaching of the Bible, and it is a misunderstanding of the teaching of prophetic Scriptures.

Battles have been fought there in the past, but no battle will be fought there in the future. I want to stress that fact. We need to consider some of the truths that the Bible teaches about Armageddon, especially with regard to its place in the events revealed in Bible prophecy concerning the days of the end time.

(1) Where is Armageddon?

Firstly, we should ask, where is Armageddon? I want to make it clear Armageddon is a place. That is a simple statement, but it is a vital fact to be emphasised. Armageddon is a real place; it is not figurative; it is not imaginative; it is not fiction; it is an actual place that is located in the Land of Israel. Armageddon is not in Afghanistan, it is not in Kuwait, it is not in Iraq or Bosnia; it is not in the United States of America, or any of the places that we hear so much about in the news. Armageddon is not in Ukraine, as some have suggested in recent months. Armageddon is in the Land of Israel. It is in the northern part of Israel, approximately 80 miles north of the City of Jerusalem. It is located near the famous range of mountains in which Mount Carmel is included. You might have been there if you have visited the Land of Israel. It is a tremendous sight. Armageddon is a vast plain; it is approximately 17 miles long, 30 miles wide and covers a very large area of land from the Mediterranean in the west right across to the Jordan valley in the east.

It is of special interest to farmers to know that it is a very fertile region. There is a lot of barley, wheat and vegetables that are grown there. It is just like the region of East

Anglia here in England. So, where is Armageddon? It is in the nation of Israel. That is a very important fact to establish at the outset of the message, because whatever God has planned to take place at Armageddon, it will take place in the nation of Israel. Do not think that a war in Ukraine or anywhere else is Armageddon because it is not. I stress it again; whatever God has planned to take place at Armageddon will take place in the Land of Israel. So, we want to urge you to keep your eyes on the nation of Israel as far as future prophetic events are concerned. That is something which has been emphasised regularly in these meetings over the years, and we do it again now.

(2) How is Armageddon known?

Secondly, let us consider, how is Armageddon known? I would point out that the name Armageddon only occurs in one place in the Scriptures and that is in Revelation 16:16. That makes it a very significant verse or text of God's Word. The name Armageddon means 'the mountain of Megiddo,' and the name refers to the fact that the fort of Megiddo was built on a hill that overlooked the great plain itself.

Armageddon is also known by a number of other names in the Scriptures. It is called 'the Valley of Megiddo.' That comes from the last part of the name, Armageddon. In addition, it is sometimes described in the Bible as 'the Valley of Jezreel.' It is important to know all the names by which this place is described, so that when you are reading in the Scriptures and are studying the Word of God, you will know exactly the location about which you are reading. So I want to urge you to look for those names as you study the Bible, and you will learn what the Bible has to say about this place, especially what happened there in the past.

Remember that the Valley of Megiddo was the scene of the battle between Barak and Sisera. Sisera was the captain of the army of Jabin, who was the king of Canaan. When Deborah rejoiced in the victory she said at that time, 'the kings came and fought, then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo ...' (Judges 5:19). So Barak defeated Jabin on this great plain of Megiddo.

Also, Good king Josiah was mortally wounded when he foolishly fought against Pharaoh-Necho, king of Egypt, on this plain of Megiddo. In fact, 2 Chronicles 35:22 states he 'came to fight in the valley of Megiddo.'

In addition, it was on the eastern side of Megiddo, on the mountains of Gilboa that Saul, the first king of Israel, and all his sons (of whom Jonathan was the most famous) died in battle at the hands of the Philistines.

Let me remind you as well that after the confrontation with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, Elijah, the man of God, ran across this vast plain. He ran all the way from Carmel to Jezreel ahead of Ahab's chariot.

Those are some of the well-known, some of the prominent stories. It is clear that, in the past, some very well-known events recorded in Scripture happened on this very plain.

Some of those events are the foreshadowings of the future; but be in no doubt that the most significant event that is to take place at Armageddon is something that is still before us. It is something which is yet future.

(3) What will happen at Armageddon?

The third thing I emphasise is the question, what will happen at Armageddon? If there is not going to be a battle on this plain, then what actually will take place? The answer is, Armageddon will be the gathering place of the army, the gathering place for a battle. It is described in Revelation 16:14, 'to **gather** them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.' So, the armies will gather for a battle at another location. I would encourage you as you read the verses in this chapter to notice the emphasis upon this 'gathering,' particularly in verse 16, 'he **gathered** them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.' It is clear that at Armageddon the armies will be assembled, or gathered, but the reality is, there is no mention of a battle of Armageddon. In these words, the emphasis is upon the gathering. Therefore it is wrong, it is unscriptural, to speak about the battle of Armageddon because at the time of the end, no battle is going to be fought in this area, on this plain. It is just the assembly point for the armies.

(4) When will the armies gather at Armageddon?

I want to emphasise a fourth question, when will the armies gather at Armageddon? I encourage you to think of the context of this chapter. Let me remind you that Revelation 16 sets forth that solemn time in the future when seven angels will pour out upon the earth the seven golden vials full of the wrath of God. Verse 2, at the beginning of the chapter, makes it clear that the first vial is poured out at the time when antichrist has emerged and will be in power. The verse says, 'And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them that worshipped his image.' So it is clear that this refers to a time when the antichrist has arisen; but remember that the gathering at Armageddon takes place at the time of the sixth vial. That is clearly stated in verse 12. It says, 'And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.'

So it is clear that all these events, including the gathering at Armageddon, will not take place until antichrist is reigning over the revived Roman Empire. That is an important fact which has to be understood. I stress to you that the antichrist has not yet arisen. No such man is reigning over the Roman earth at this time. Understanding that truth will save you from making serious mistakes in identifying the great gathering at Armageddon.

History is filled with great military gatherings, great military battles; and some in modern history, or even at the present time. Often, when these have taken place, it has been declared even by Bible teachers, 'this is Armageddon,' and it has caused a lot of confusion particularly in the understanding of prophecy. However, let there be no mistake that the gathering at Armageddon will not take place until the man of sin is revealed. This chapter, Revelation 16, leaves that fact in no doubt.

(5) Who will gather at Armageddon?

The fifth thing I want to say is, who will gather at Armageddon? Look at the words of verse 14 to answer that question. 'For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the

battle of that great day of God Almighty.’ Notice the words in the middle of the verse, ‘the whole world.’ It is important to say that the word ‘world’ here is *oikoumene*. It is the same word used in Luke 2:1 which declares, ‘And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.’ That word means ‘the Roman world.’ Take a look at Strong’s concordance and you will see that clearly for yourself. It means the Roman world, the Roman earth. It is not the kosmos which refers to the whole planet. This word *oikoumene* refers to all the countries around the Mediterranean Sea. So America will not be there, nor will Australia, or India, or China. They will not be part of the armies that assemble at Megiddo. This will be what they could call a European army, because it will be made up of soldiers from the nations all around the Mediterranean Sea.

(6) How are these armies gathered at Armageddon?

The sixth point I want to emphasize is, how are these armies gathered at Armageddon? I would point out to you that this is a very striking portion of Scripture, because notice who actually gathers these armies, who assembles them. Look at verses 13 and 14, ‘And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon (*that is a reference to the devil*), and out of the mouth of the beast (*that is the antichrist*), and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.’ Note that the armies at Armageddon are not gathered by men or by governments, but they are gathered by a Satanic power. In verse 13 we read of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet, so here is the false or the counterfeit trinity, the devil’s counterfeit of the triune God; and we are told that at this time false or evil spirits like frogs come out of each of their mouths and they go forth to work miracles. The armies of the Roman earth are gathered to Armageddon by these evil spirits.

So, be in no doubt this is no ordinary army. This army is assembled and strengthened and empowered by Satanic activity. Remember, the Bible warns us, ‘we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world.’ So, the reference here is to a great spiritual battle with the powers of darkness and that is the sort of battle that will take place at the end of this age. Ultimately, that will be true of the armies gathered at Armageddon. So, what that means is that this army will not be defeated, it will not be overcome, by normal or by natural means but by a supernatural power.

(7) Why are they gathered at Armageddon?

The seventh thing that I want to emphasize is a very important part of this theme. Why are they gathered at Armageddon? Why are these armies gathering together on that vast plain? The answer is to march into Jerusalem in order to attack it and to fight against it.

There are two Old Testament prophecies that especially speak and teach about the purpose of the armies that gather in Megiddo. The first is Joel 3:2. ‘I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the Valley of Jehoshaphat.’ Notice that Joel

says, 'I will also gather,' so where is the gathering? That is a reference to our theme, the gathering at Armageddon. Then they are going to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. That is the valley between the Mount of Olives and the City of Jerusalem itself. The other great prophecy that speaks of this time is in Zechariah chapters 12 - 14. In Zechariah 14:2 we are specifically told, 'For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle.' Note the words, 'I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle.' So be in no doubt; the Scriptures are very clear. The armies are assembled on the plain of Megiddo, but the battle is at Jerusalem, some 80 miles south of Megiddo.

Think of the great military attacks on Jerusalem that are recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures. In the days of Rehoboam, Jerusalem was attacked by a vast innumerable army. It was a confederacy, a joint force that included the Egyptians, the Lubims, the Sukkiims and the Ethiopians. Also, in the days of Hezekiah, Jerusalem was surrounded and besieged by the Assyrians. You could think too of an example from secular history, in AD 70 when Titus, the Roman general, marched his Roman legions into the City of Jerusalem and destroyed it. All those attacks on Jerusalem are foreshadows of what the antichrist will do just before the Saviour comes again.

Let me stress that the very route that antichrist's army will take as it marches through Israel from Armageddon to Jerusalem, is recorded for us in the Scriptures. It gives us an idea of the detail in the prophetic scriptures that God has given to us. Turn to Isaiah 10:28-32. Take time to study it very carefully for yourself. The route that antichrist's army will take is given here in detail. We are told that he will pass through such well-known places as Migron, Michmash, Ramah (remember the home of Samuel the prophet), Gibeah of Saul (the place where Saul, the first king of Israel, had his residence), and then finally the antichrist comes to Nob (that is where the priests were in the days of David). Nob is on the Mount of Olives. It is modern-day Mount Scopus, where the Hebrew university in Jerusalem is located. Isaiah says, 'As yet shall he remain at Nob that day.' Antichrist and his army will hold back, they will delay for a day before launching the final attack upon the City of Jerusalem.

As well as giving us the route that the armies will take coming down from Armageddon, the Bible also tells us what the evil desire and purpose of those armies will be in attacking the City of Jerusalem. Psalm 83:4 says, 'They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.' Antichrist will want to come and exterminate Israel from the earth.

The Opening of the River Euphrates

Let me tell you of a very interesting event which is closely associated with the armies of antichrist attacking Jerusalem. Take a look at Revelation 16:12. It says, 'And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.' Note those words at the end of the verse, 'that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.' Here is something quite remarkable. Just as the Lord opened the Red Sea and just as He opened the River Jordan giving the Israelites a path through Jordan as they entered the land of promise, so at the time of the end, the Lord will perform a similar miracle. He is going to open the waters of the great River Euphrates in the land of Iraq to allow the kings and

the armies from the east to come and attack Babylon. Remember that Babylon will be the city of antichrist and those kings from the east will launch an attack upon Babylon. Antichrist will hear the report of that attack when he is about to launch his attack upon Jerusalem, and he will be greatly troubled by the report that he hears of the armies of the east attacking his City of Babylon. As a result of that, antichrist will push ahead with his attack upon the City of Jerusalem with an even greater force and power. That is something that Daniel tells us about. He foretells these events in Daniel 11:44 (the chapter that outlines the wars of antichrist) and it says, 'But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him.' That is a reference to the same incident of which we have been reading in Revelation 16:12. There is going to be a report. There will be 'tidings ... that shall trouble him. 'Therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy.' That will be the result of the report, he will go forth with greater power, greater effort to destroy the City of Jerusalem, 'and utterly to make away many.'

Is China in the Prophetic Scriptures?

Sometimes the question is asked, Is China mentioned in the prophetic Scriptures? You know that at this time a lot of people are suggesting that Russia is mentioned in the prophetic Scriptures. We did address that matter in the chairman's remarks in one of the meeting broadcasts and an article which was published in 'Watching and Waiting.' Well, another similar question is whether China is mentioned in the prophetic Scriptures. The answer is that they are not mentioned specifically anywhere by name, but it is true to say that they could be included among the kings of the east of which we are thinking and considering here. Those kings of the east will attack Babylon, and China is the most prominent, the most powerful nation in that region of the world.

How will the Battle at Jerusalem End?

Let me finish with this question, how will the battle at Jerusalem end? The Israeli army is a very formidable military force, and that cannot be denied. You only have to think of their victory in 1967 of what is called 'the six day war' to realise that. However, I have to say to you that it will not be the Israeli army that will defeat antichrist and his armies in that last great battle. It will be the Lord Himself who will scatter this military force at Jerusalem at His coming. Can I remind you of what was said when Israel came out of Egypt? Moses encouraged the people with the words, 'The LORD shall fight for you.' That is going to be repeated perhaps in a far greater way. That is exactly what the Lord will do for Israel at the end of this age. He is going to come, and He is going to fight. He is going to fight for Israel, to fight for their defence. This is how Zechariah the prophet describes it in chapter 14:3, 'Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle.' So, let us be encouraged that the Lord is coming. He is coming again and one of the reasons He is coming is to fight in defence of the nation of Israel. That will be the greatest example of divine intervention that this world has ever known. At His coming, antichrist and his armies will be destroyed. 'That wicked ... whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming' (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

So, will there be a battle of Armageddon? The answer is 'No.' There is no battle at Armageddon; that is the gathering place for the armies to march from there upon the City of Jerusalem. 'He gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.'

Thy Kingdom Come

By Bishop J C Ryle

These words are part of the Lord's Prayer. Did you ever consider what they mean? The subject is one about which many mistakes prevail. It is one about which it is most important to your own comfort to have clear views. Give me your attention, while I try to explain to you the kingdom of God.

I ask you then to understand that Jesus Christ will come back again to this world one day and reign over it as King. He shall return with power and great glory in the clouds of heaven, and the kingdoms of this world shall all become His. And then shall be fulfilled the words of the Lord's Prayer, 'Thy kingdom come.'

Then, He intends to 'execute judgment' upon all the ungodly inhabitants of Christendom, to 'burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.' 'In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel' (Jude 15; Matthew 3:12; 2 Thessalonians 1: 8).

Then, He intends to raise His dead saints and gather His living ones, to gather together the scattered tribes of Israel, and **to set up an empire on earth,** in which every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue confess that Christ is Lord.

When, how, where, in what manner, all these things shall be, we cannot say particularly. Enough for us to know that **they shall be.** The Lord Jesus has undertaken to do them, and they shall be performed. As surely as He was born of a Virgin, and lived on earth thirty-three years as a servant, so surely He shall come with clouds in glory, and reign on earth as a King.

Settle it down in your mind that Christ is one day to have a complete kingdom in this world – that His kingdom is not yet set up – but that it will be set up in the day of His return. Know clearly whose kingdom it is to be one day: not Satan the usurper's but Jesus Christ's. Know clearly when the kingdom is to change hands, and the usurper to be cast out: when the Lord Jesus returns in person, and not before. Know these things clearly, and you will do well.

Know these things clearly, and then **you will not cherish extravagant expectations** from any Church, minister, or religious machinery in this present dispensation. You will not marvel to see ministers and missionaries not converting all to whom they preach. You will not wonder to find that while some believe the Gospel, many believe not. You will remember that 'the days are evil,' and that the time of general conversion has not arrived. Alas, for the man who expects a millennium before the Lord Jesus returns. How can this possibly be, if the world in the day of His coming is to be found

as it was in the days of Noah and Lot? (Luke 17:26-30).

Know these things clearly, and then **you will not be confounded and surprised by the continuance of immense evils in the world.** Wars and tumults, and oppressions, and dishonesty, and selfishness, and covetousness, and superstition, and bad government, and abounding heresies, will not appear to you unaccountable. You will say to yourself, 'The time of Christ's power has not yet arrived – the devil is still working among his children, and sowing darkness and division broadcast among the saints – the true King is yet to come.'

Know these things clearly and then **you will see why God delays the final glory,** and allows things to go on as they do in this world. It is not that He is not able to prevent evil – it is not that He is slack in the fulfilling of His promises – but the Lord is taking out for Himself, a people by the preaching of the Gospel (Acts 15:14), and when that work is completed, then the kingdom of Christ shall be set up, and the throne of grace exchanged for the throne of glory.

Know these things clearly, and then **you will work diligently to do good to souls.** The time is short. 'The night is far spent. The day is at hand.' The signs of the times call loudly for watchfulness, and speak with no uncertain voice. Surely if we would pluck a few more brands from the burning before it is too late, we must work hard, and lose no time.

Know these things clearly, and then **you will be often looking for the coming of the day of God.** You will regard the second advent as a glorious and comfortable truth, around which your best hopes will all be clustered. You will not merely think of Christ crucified, but you will think also of Christ coming again. You will long for the days of refreshing, and the manifestation of the Sons of God (Acts 3:19; Romans 8:19). You will find peace in looking back to the cross, and you will find joyful hope in looking forward to the kingdom.

The Gospel of the Grace of God

11

By Dr Cecil Yates Biss

(Continued from page 142).

Reference has been made to the special responsibility entailed upon men by the knowledge of the Word of God, and one or two passages of Scripture may now be referred to in which such responsibility is shown. For example, at the preaching of Jonah, Nineveh, we are told, repented. 'And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that He had said that He would do unto them; and He did it not.' This repentance of theirs was not, it is needless to say, 'repentance unto life' in the spiritual sense, for the salvation of Nineveh was only deliverance from the penalties *in this world* threatened by the anger of God against their

sins; but how much greater would have the responsibility of Nineveh become had it refused the message of Jonah? Hence the case of Nineveh is quoted by our Lord as indicating the still greater responsibility of the men of Israel who rejected Himself. 'The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here' (Luke 11:32). Men were responsible for the revelation given them in the person and words and miracles of Jesus Christ, and this responsibility was heavier than Nineveh's by so much as God's Son was greater than God's prophet.

In like manner we find Paul at Athens pressing upon the minds of his hearers the responsibility that came on them by his preaching, for when he had declared to them 'the Unknown God,' whom they ignorantly worshipped, and made known to them the truth as to His being and righteousness and mercy, he bid them know that 'God commandeth all men everywhere to repent.' This repentance, like the repentance of Nineveh, is not the same as that 'repentance unto life' which God grants by the work of His Spirit to those who are the subjects of His converting grace, but a repentance for which men are naturally responsible when facts are made known to them by divine revelation under the authority of God, which their natural faculties are able to understand and appreciate, and to which their consciences are able to respond. Such, too, is the force of Luke 10:13: 'Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.'

For such repentance, therefore, as man is capable of in virtue of his moral powers and the light of conscience, he is responsible to God; and this responsibility is never so great as when the clear light of the Gospel is brought to bear upon the mind. But, though it is undoubtedly true that a man 'cannot turn and bring himself by his own natural strength' to God, yet it is also true that of his own natural will and strength he can multiply his rebellion in trampling under foot the message of grace. The language of Paul in Acts 13 abundantly proves this. After he had been preaching the Gospel to a general congregation, in the synagogue at Antioch, he solemnly warned the hearers of the consequences of the rejection of his message: 'Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets: behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.' And to the same persons, on a later occasion, he said, 'It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.' It is not a little remarkable that in the immediate context of this solemn responsibility for the rejection of the Gospel, saving faith is declared to be, not the fruit of natural wisdom or choice, but of God's sovereign decree. 'When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.'

We can readily understand, then, whatever other difficulties may attend the subject, that men must be responsible for the way in which they treat the proclamation of the Gospel when it falls upon their ears. The heart that turns away from the precious words 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners' only does so because it is governed

by the blindness and hardening influences of sin; and for that sin God is not, and cannot be, responsible: the responsibility is the sinner's own! Yet, it remains true that no man can come unto Christ except the Father draw him, and that Grace alone enables any one to receive the Gospel and to believe on Jesus Christ unto life eternal. Such faith is essentially conjoined with that change in the soul which the Scripture calls 'Repentance unto life' (Acts 11:18). The word 'repentance' signifies a change of mind: this is its radical significance; and it is not, as many have supposed, sorrow for sin and the like experiences, for these are not repentance but the results of repentance; and the cause must always be distinguished from its effects. When the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:17) 'came to himself,' he experienced a change of mind which enabled him to see his father, and himself, and the whole circumstances of his case, in a perfectly new light; and the consequence of this change of mind was the formation of the resolve 'I will arise and go to my father.' This is a beautiful Scriptural illustration of what saving repentance is in connection with the Gospel. The soul in its natural condition is blinded by Satan, 'the god of this world,' 'lest the light of the glorious Gospel of grace should shine in,' and it remains so until God 'shines within to give the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ;' but when He thus causes the light to shine within, in His light we see light, and the blindness disappears. The moment (there must of necessity be a moment when the soul passes out of death unto life (John 5:24), but it is not intended by this language to imply that this must be realised in the actual experience of the soul. It may or may not be so realised) the true character of God as revealed in the Gospel, is made known by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, the enmity of the heart is removed and the soul turns to God in trust and love. No words can more strongly affirm than those quoted above that repentance is the personal and saving work of the Spirit of God in the heart of man – a work which man cannot perform for himself; for, as a matter of fact, he never realises what it is, nor what is his need of it, until it has been wrought upon him; just as one blind from his birth could never realise what light was, nor how the faculty of seeing was exercised, unless his eyes were suddenly opened by a miracle of power.

Now, with repentance faith is essentially conjoined, and in the nature of the case the repentant soul is a believing soul: it repents and it believes – it believes as it repents. The moment the enmity to God that exists in every natural heart is subdued, that soul stands in an attitude of trust towards God. For, as in the circumstances of natural life, sight commands faith – whence comes the ordinary phrase 'seeing is believing' – so in spiritual things, to rightly see the character and truth and love of God as expressed in the Person and Cross of His Beloved Son, is to trust God. Faith is not so much an act which the soul formally performs, as a child-like trust that naturally replaces the previous unbelief at the very moment the darkness disappears and the true light shines, showing God in His true character and attitude as presented in the Gospel. 'Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ' (Acts 20:21), the subject of the Apostle's testimony to Jews and Greeks alike, are therefore, conjoined blessings, coincident blessings, and are both alike the fruit of the enlightening and quickening work of the Spirit of God within the soul.

There is, then, a repentance of which man is naturally capable, and a repentance of

which man is naturally incapable. This has been abundantly shown from the quoted passages. The Ninevites could repent, Bethsaida could repent, 'the men of this generation' who rejected Christ could repent, and the men of our time could likewise repent, as regards all repentance, all change of mind from wrong to right of which man's natural faculties are capable when under the guidance of revealed truth in the Scripture. But of that spiritual repentance, however, which is wrought by the Holy Spirit in the soul, God shining in the soul to give the light of His own knowledge in the face of Jesus Christ, man is not independently capable; and as it is with this repentance that faith is essentially conjoined, it is clear that of such faith man, by himself, by the exercise of his natural powers, is likewise not capable. It is of the deepest importance to distinguish the responsibilities to which man is held in virtue of the natural powers bestowed upon him by God, from those which he can only discharge in virtue of capabilities which are bestowed upon him by the converting work of the Spirit of God. For the former he is responsible: the latter he can only perform, and is only invited to perform, under circumstances which indicate that that work of the Spirit which is needful has already been begun.

(To be continued)

Sodomy

'Sodomy' is a term which we use to describe that which was practised by the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah before God destroyed the Cities of the Plain (Genesis 19). We use the term 'Sodomites' to describe those people who presently indulge in that practice. Sadly, in the present time, there has been a much-heralded return to this vile practice. It is distressing to write upon such a subject – but God has caused much to be written about it. Any person who sincerely desires to know the things said by God can very easily find out by reading His Holy Word – the Bible. Many today are extremely proud about their behaviour and they constantly use the word 'Pride.' That may seem strange as it really is something of which they ought to be thoroughly ashamed. They appear to be having a great influence upon the governments of the world.

In Britain, Mr David Cameron, when he was prime minister, arranged for the legalisation of what is termed 'same-sex marriage,' which is, of course, sodomy. Thus, he has brought the judgment of God upon the kingdom.

Many years ago, there was a meeting advertised to be held in Southwark Cathedral in London and it was described as being for 'Christian Gays.' The speaker was to be the then Bishop of Guildford. The United Protestant Council organised a protest and I was one of those who travelled to Southwark to join the protest. Before the cathedral doors were opened, a cleric stood opposite where I was and he held up a placard on which was written 'Stop Fundamentalist Bigotry.' By doing that, he was certainly giving evidence that he was the one who was really bigoted. A friend of mine read aloud the closing

verses of Romans 1, and amazingly, a hush came over the whole assembly of the noisily chattering crowd of people who had gathered outside the cathedral. Yet, to all appearances, the multitudes attending the meeting preferred the words of the so-called bishop to the words of God.

Those verses in Romans 1, amongst many others, clearly state how God views the matter. Verse 18 speaks plainly of the wrath of God and it really is foolish for these men of pride not to realise that one day they will have to stand before their Maker. Verse 26 solemnly tells us of God giving them over to their vile affections; and verse 27 refers to them receiving in themselves the recompense of their error. When we come to chapter 2, it commences by asserting that such people are inexcusable. When the Mighty God deals in justice, as He most assuredly will, they will have no excuse whatsoever which can be offered.

Bible students will, of course, know what the Scriptures teach about the end of this age – concerning ‘the perilous times’ that shall come. Psalm 2 is only one of those many passages which definitely refer to the rebellion against God and against His Anointed (Christ); about the despising and rejecting of God’s Law; which will lead to the rise of the antichrist.

We may be accused of being homophobic but the truth is that we are only seeking to warn men for their own good. If only they would take heed to God’s Word now, how much better it would be for them!

S.A.T.

Imputed Righteousness

By B W Newton

(This is No 7 in the series entitled ‘Scriptural Truths’ – a set of 24 messages by Mr Newton on various subjects).

There are some who object to its being said that Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us, on the ground that the expression ‘imputed righteousness’ is unscriptural. It is nowhere, they say, found in Scripture. Are we then contending about words, or about the verities conveyed by words? We do not find in Scripture the words ‘Trinity,’ nor ‘Incarnation,’ nor ‘Satisfaction,’ yet shall we on that account refuse to use these words? or say that they are unsuited to convey the truth expressed by them? We are told by the Apostle that we (i.e. believers) are constituted righteous before God by means of the obedience of Another. If this statement be true, the obedience of Christ must be transferred to us, reckoned to us, or set down to our account. Is not this imputation? And this is the more evident, because in Romans 5 the imputation of Christ’s righteousness is spoken of as correlative to the imputation of Adam’s first sin. Shall we deny the fact of the imputation of Adam’s sin whereby we are constituted sinners? We

must, if we deny the imputation of that righteousness whereby we are constituted righteous. How is it possible to hold the one and reject the other? Shall we then reject it? If we do, if we reject imputation, we incur the guilt of rejecting that which God has distinctly revealed as the ground of our condemnation on the one hand, and the ground of our justification on the other. By imputation we were ruined, and by imputation we are saved.

I have argued on the supposition that the expression ‘imputed righteousness’ is not found in Scripture. Even then the truth would be the same; for we are concerned not with words, but with things. In Romans 4:16, however, we do find the very words, ‘impute righteousness’ – ‘David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God IMPUTETH RIGHTEOUSNESS without works.’

Through faith we have become connected with no fictitious righteousness, but with a righteousness actually wrought out for us by our God and Saviour in the days of His flesh. And having that righteousness imputed to us, we stand before God, even now, in true actual possession of righteousness bestowed on us freely by God – as the result of which bestowment we are to reign in life: ‘for if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance (*the superabounding*) of grace and of THE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ.’

Whilst, therefore, the ascription to us of the righteousness thus wrought out for us by Immanuel is the sole ground of our justification, we must remember that the riches of God’s grace towards us through Christ extend beyond our justification. He who, in fulfilment of the will of God, voluntarily wrought out for us that righteousness which enables us, even now, to appear before God, as those who have all its value attributed to us, has thereby brought us into the possession of that, the value of which is infinite, because it is the righteousness of One whose merits are infinite. Who can search into the depths of the merits of Immanuel? Can any of us say what is the estimate formed thereof by Him who dwelleth in the Heavens? His merits are as His Person – past finding out; and therefore the value of the righteousness imputed to us for our justification is infinite. Its value is not exhausted in our justification. It is eternal: it abides for ever: and because of it the redeemed receive every favour and every blessing that reaches them, whether in time or in eternity. How, then, have we to cleave to that great and all-blessed truth which is taught in the word IMPUTATION! It is the great distinctive doctrine of the gospel of the grace of God – the very key-stone of the arch of blessing.

Destroy it, and you destroy every hope. On it, as on a foundation, God has made to rest the whole economy of grace throughout the whole detail of its ministration and development. There is not a blessing which God ever has dispensed, or ever will dispense, to the redeemed, as the redeemed, in time or in eternity, that is not the result of IMPUTATION. However excellent and precious may be that which He **imparteth** to His people in the way of inherent grace, or gift, yet all such bestowments are simply the consequences of **imputation**. Whatever God thus **imparteth**, is because of that which He hath **imputed**. It is the knowledge of this that enables us to say truly, ‘**Of Him**, and **through Him**, and **to Him**, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.’

WATCHING AND WAITING

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JUSTIFICATION

Sinners are justified by grace,
Through the Redeemer's righteousness;
This is a glorious robe indeed,
And wrought for Abram's favoured seed.

Jehovah, in His wise decree,
Did all His chosen people see
As justified in His dear Son,
In Him from everlasting one.

When through the Spirit, they believe,
The pleasing witness they receive;
And they are freely justified
Through the dear Man that groaned and died.

Yes, they rejoice in pard'ning Blood
And triumph in the Son of God,
With joy and peace they all confess
'Christ is the Lord our Righteousness.'

(Richard Burnham)

S.G.A.T. Meetings: Arrangements have been made, God willing, for meetings of the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony to continue through 2023, with the theme '**The Prophecy of Zechariah.**' We trust that friends will be interested in this illuminating Book, and we would like to see others come to our meetings, which we expect to hold on the fourth Friday of each month except August and December. The Spring Conference is in April and the Autumn Conference in September, when we have afternoon meetings at 4.pm. in addition to the usual evening meetings. All evening meetings are at 7.pm. Details of the meetings for this Quarter are given on the back page but so that you can insert the dates for the remainder of the meetings in your diary and arrange to be present, we give particulars which are as follows, subject to the will of the Lord:

July 28	The Prince of Peace (chapter 9)	Stephen A Toms
September 22 (Aft) ..	The Shepherd of Israel (chapter 10-11).....	David McMillan
	(Even) The Final Conflict and Deliverance	
	(chapter 12).....	David McMillan
October 27	The Open Fountain and the Smitten Shepherd	
	(chapter 13).....	Richard Monteith
November 24.....	The Second Coming of Christ and the Millennial Kingdom	
	(chapter 14).....	Paul Toms

‘Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.’

Revelation 1:3.

You are warmly invited to meetings arranged by the
Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony, to be held, God willing, at
NEW LIFE BIBLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
44 SALUSBURY ROAD, LONDON, NW6 6NN
(near Queens Park Underground Station – Bakerloo Line)

**Theme for 2023 – ‘The Prophecy of Zechariah’
Spring Conference - April 28th, 4pm and 7pm**

Afternoon Subject: The Candlestick (chapter 4).

Evening Subject: The Flying Roll and the Ephah (chapter 5)

Speaker: Brian McClung

May 26th, 7pm

Subject: The Four Chariots and the Crowning of Joshua (chapter 6)

Speaker: John Douglas

June 23rd, 7pm

Subject: Israel’s Past Sin and Future Blessings (chapters 7-8)

Speaker: Ian Shaw

It is hoped that each message will be recorded and friends should be able to listen to and download messages from our website. Full lists of S.G.A.T. recordings and of publications can be found on our website (WWW.SGAT.ORG) or may be obtained from the S.G.A.T. secretary.

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To our subscribers and friends: Please send subscriptions, gifts to Sustentation Fund, for Bible circulation and orders for publications to the S.G.A.T. secretary, Mr Stephen A Toms, 1 Donald Way, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 9JB. Cheques, etc. should be made payable to ‘Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony.’ In order to save postage, receipts will be sent with the next issue of the magazine.

To those not residing in the United Kingdom: In view of the high charge for exchanging foreign currency, it would be appreciated if, where possible, friends send in sterling. Supporters in Australia, Canada, or New Zealand may send to their respective representatives. Payments can be made over the S.G.A.T. web-site.

S.G.A.T. Council: Peter Fleming, Martin Humphrey, Brian McClung, David McMillan, Richard Monteith, Andrew P Toms, Paul Toms, Stephen A Toms.